TOMB OF DRACULA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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THE TOMB OF DRACULA™

YOU SUMMONED ME HERE TO SLAY ME, QUINCY HARKER--

--BUT TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT YOU DIE!!

BATTLEGROUND OF BLOOD!

Hidden in the *shadows* where legend and reality merge, there are *tales* of a being who has lived *more than five hundred years;* they say he is a creature born not on earth, but in the deepest bowels of *Hell* itself; they say he thrives upon the *blood* of innocents, that he is the King of Darkness...the Prince of Evil and that even the *bravest* man quakes in fear at the merest mention of his name...

STan Lee PRESENTS: **TOMB OF DRACULA!**

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AND SOME CALL HIM... MADNESS!

"OH GOD, I HAVE **WAITED** SO LONG FOR THIS NIGHT-- THIS NIGHT WHICH SHALL **ANSWER** ALL THAT I HAVE **SPENT** MY LIFE QUESTIONING...

"DRACULA WILL BE **HERE** IN MY ANCESTRAL HOME QUITE SHORTLY... AND I SIT **APPREHENSIVELY** WAITING TO LEARN IF I SHALL LIVE OR DIE--

"--AND, IN TURN, IF THE DEMON I'VE SPENT MORE THAN **HALF A CENTURY** BATTLING, SHALL DIE AS WELL.

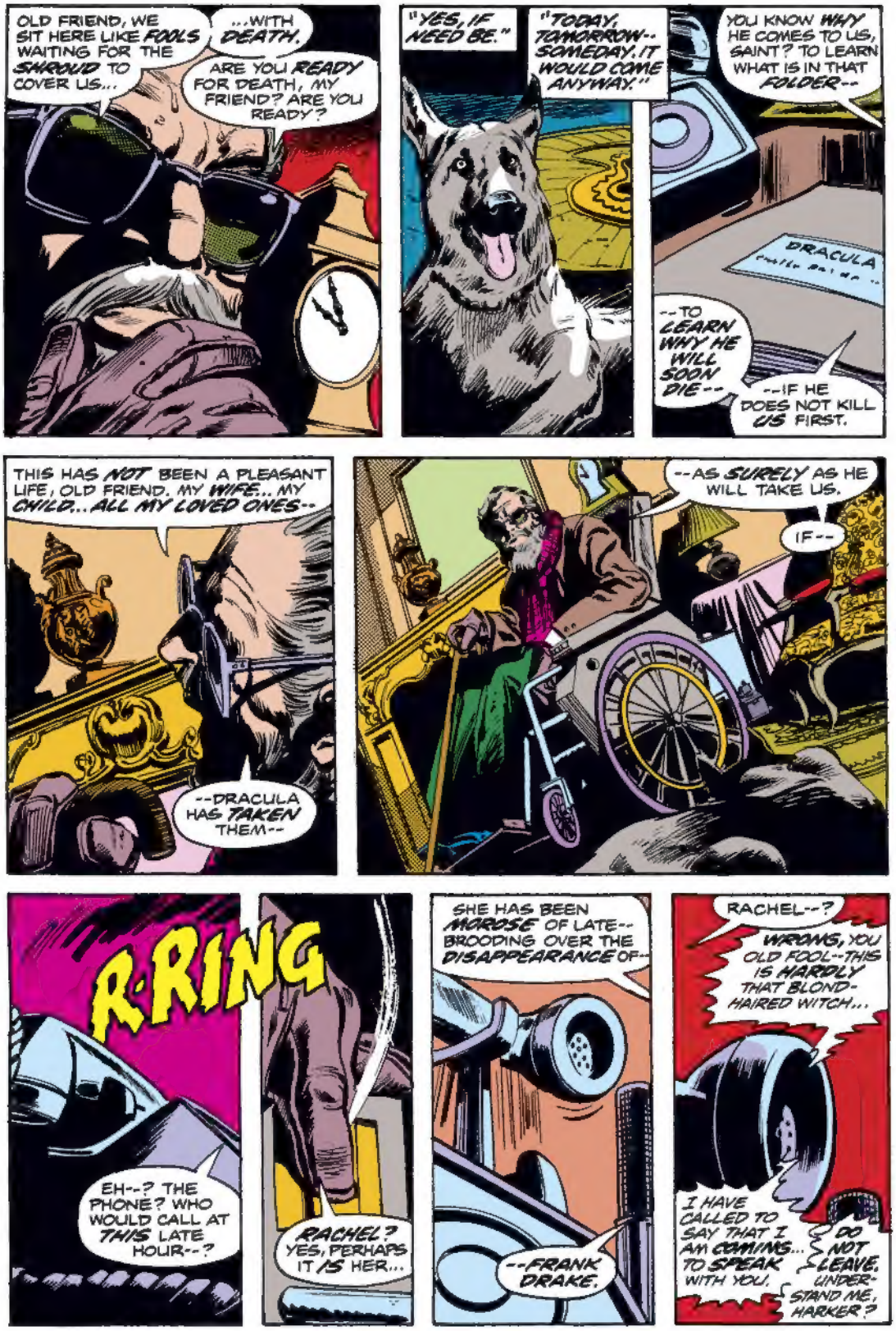
"AND SO I WAIT... AND, IN THE NONCE, I HAVE **SAINT** TO KEEP ME COMPANY, AS HE HAS FOR THESE MANY YEARS.

IT **WON'T** BE LONG, SAINT-- NOT TOO MUCH LONGER.

AND THEN, MY GOOD FRIEND, WE SHALL SEE IF **GOOD** CAN DEFEAT **EVIL** AT LAST.

"SAINT IS QUIET--HE WAITS IN **AGONIZING ANTICIPATION** EVEN AS I DO--

"--PERHAPS **DREADING** WHAT MAY SOON COME TO PASS.


OLD FRIEND, WE SIT HERE LIKE FOOLS WAITING FOR THE SHROUD TO COVER US...
...WITH DEATH.
ARE YOU READY FOR DEATH, MY FRIEND? ARE YOU READY?
"YES, IF NEED BE."
"TODAY, TOMORROW--SOMEDAY. IT WOULD COME ANYWAY."
YOU KNOW WHY HE COMES TO US, SAINT? TO LEARN WHAT IS IN THAT FOLDER--
DRACULA
--TO LEARN WHY HE WILL SOON DIE--
--IF HE DOES NOT KILL US FIRST.
THIS HAS NOT BEEN A PLEASANT LIFE, OLD FRIEND. MY WIFE... MY CHILD... ALL MY LOVED ONES--
--DRACULA HAS TAKEN THEM--
--AS SURELY AS HE WILL TAKE US.
IF--
R-RING
EH--? THE PHONE? WHO WOULD CALL AT THIS LATE HOUR--?
RACHEL? YES, PERHAPS IT IS HER...
SHE HAS BEEN MOROSE OF LATE--BROODING OVER THE DISAPPEARANCE OF--
--FRANK DRAKE.
RACHEL--?
WRONG, YOU OLD FOOL--THIS IS HARDLY THAT BLOND-HAIRED WITCH...
I HAVE CALLED TO SAY THAT I AM COMING... TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
DO NOT LEAVE. UNDERSTAND ME, HARKER?

"I UNDERSTAND."
"I AM OLD, MY LEGS ARE CRIPPLED. THERE IS SO LITTLE STRENGTH IN MY BONES.
"AND YET I MUST BATTLE A DEMON WHO CAN NOT DIE--
"I MUST BATTLE HIM AND LAY HIM TO HIS REST--BEFORE HE SLAYS ME.
"IT IS SUCH A LUDICROUS TASK, YET, HAVE I ANY OTHER IN LIFE?"

JAJPUR, INDIA:
OUT OF THE WAY, TAJ--WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU--
IT IS YOUR SON WE HAVE COME HERE TO SLAY.
YOUR SON--THE VAMPIRE!
TAJ DOES NOT MOVE.

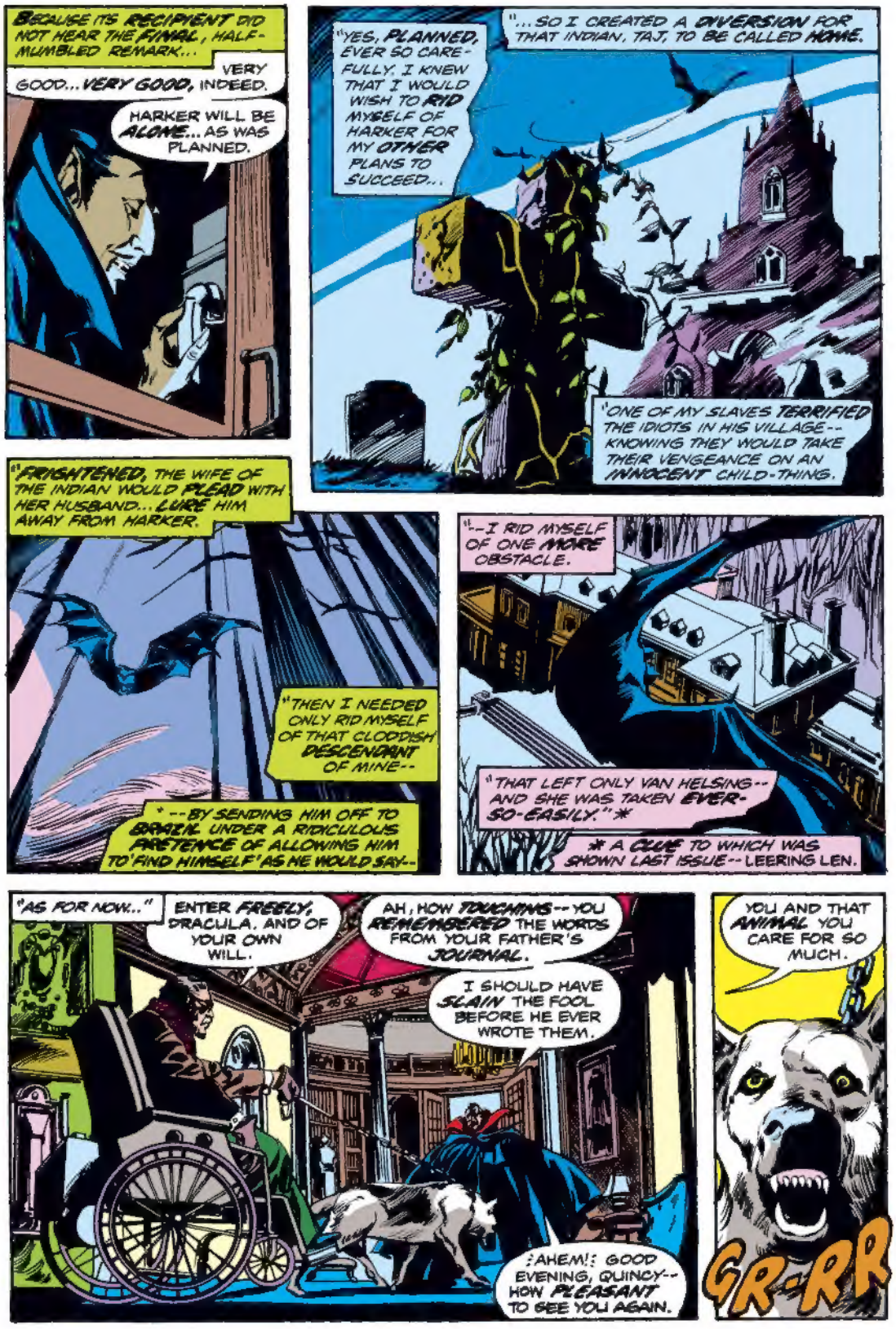
YOU REALIZE THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP US, TAJ.
YOUR SON IS UNHOLY. ONE DAY HE WILL SLAY US ALL. AND ALREADY HE HAS KILLED SEVERAL OF OUR ANIMALS.
INCORRECT. ADRI NITAL HAS SLAIN NO ONE. BUT THESE VILLAGERS HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THAT.

BRAZIL:
BLASTED JUNGLE--BLASTED HEAT! BUT WHAT AM I COMPLAINING ABOUT ANYWAY?
THIS IS THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME--A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT FRANK DRAKE IS SOME-BODY IMPORTANT--SOMEBODY CAPABLE--SOMEBODY INTELLI-GENT.
NOT JUST A FAIR-HAIRED EX-MILLION-AIRE.

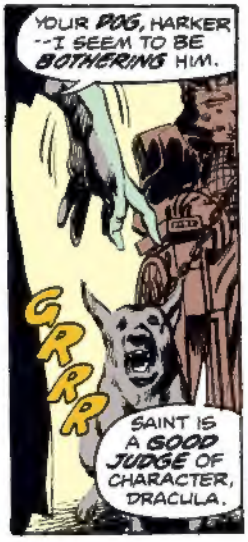
DANNY SOMMERS GAVE ME THIS CHANCE TO RUN HIS MOVE FOR HIM--AND I'M NOT GONNA FLUB THIS ONE.
HEY--EXCUSE ME. HEY, YOU!

SO, INSTEAD, THEY ATTACK THEIR FRIEND...
ATTACK AND TOSS HIM HELPLESSLY ASIDE--
--WHILE THEY PREPARE TO TAKE THE LIFE OF A CHILD--
--WHO IS ALREADY DEAD!
HEY, DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? I SAID--
WAIT ONE HOLY BLASTED MINUTE --HE DIDN'T HEAR ANY-THING.
I-I DON'T THINK HE CAN HEAR.
NO! PLEASE! DO NOT GO IN THERE! PLEASE!
BY ALLAH! YOU MUST NOT!
A MADDENED MOB DOES NOT LISTEN...
YOU ARE RIGHT, FRANK DRAKE, DESCENDANT OF DRACULA.
THIS MAN LOST HIS ABILITY TO HEAR THREE YEARS AGO...
...WHEN HE WAS SLAIN... BY THE ZUVEMBE-LORD.
OH... MY... GOD...
...THOUGH A SINGLE MAN MAY.
IT IS FOR THE BEST. YOU KNOW THAT. ADRI COULD NOT... MUST NOT LIVE.
YES, I KNOW THAT, MY BROTHER-- I KNOW THAT. AND I CRY FOR THAT KNOWLEDGE.
I--
WH-WHATEVER YOU ARE-- GET AWAY FROM ME...
GET AWAY FROM ME!
QUESTION: CAN A DEAD MAN HEAR FRANK'S FRIGHTENED COMMAND?
ANSWER: IT CAN NOT!

THERE IS THE DEVIL-CHILD NOW-- OUR BLOOD IS ALL THAT KEEPS HIM ALIVE...
...IF YOU CAN CALL SUCH A HORRIBLE EXISTENCE LIVING.
WELL, WE SHALL END THIS BLASPHEMOUS LIFE NOW!
AS HE HAS ENDED THE LIVES OF SO MANY OF US.
TAJ SCREAMS "NO!"
BUT THE MUTE PLEA GOES UNANSWERED.
YOU DON'T SPEAK... YOU DON'T STOP! WHAT ARE YOU?
BLAST IT-- WHAT ARE YOU ANY-WAY?!?
THE DEAD!
SIR? DANNY SUMMERS, SPEAKING. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT DRAKE DUDE NO MORE...
...'CAUSE IF I GOT IT FIGGERED RIGHT, HE'S OVER AN' OUT...
AND A RAPIDLY DESCENDING KNIFE GOES UNCHECKED.
...AN' DEADER THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN!
UNTIL IT IS MUCH, MUCH TOO LATE.
THERE IS NO ANSWER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS TRANSATLANTIC CALL...


BECAUSE ITS RECIPIENT DID NOT HEAR THE FINAL, HALF-MUMBLED REMARK...
VERY GOOD...VERY GOOD, INDEED.
HARKER WILL BE ALONE...AS WAS PLANNED.
"YES, PLANNED, EVER SO CAREFULLY. I KNEW THAT I WOULD WISH TO RID MYSELF OF HARKER FOR MY OTHER PLANS TO SUCCEED...
"...SO I CREATED A DIVERSION FOR THAT INDIAN, TAJ, TO BE CALLED HOME.
"ONE OF MY SLAVES TERRIFIED THE IDIOTS IN HIS VILLAGE--KNOWING THEY WOULD TAKE THEIR VENGEANCE ON AN INNOCENT CHILD-THING.
"FRIGHTENED, THE WIFE OF THE INDIAN WOULD PLEAD WITH HER HUSBAND...LURE HIM AWAY FROM HARKER.
"THEN I NEEDED ONLY RID MYSELF OF THAT CLODDISH DESCENDANT OF MINE--
*--BY SENDING HIM OFF TO BRAZIL UNDER A RIDICULOUS PRETENCE OF ALLOWING HIM TO 'FIND HIMSELF' AS HE WOULD SAY--
"--I RID MYSELF OF ONE MORE OBSTACLE.
"THAT LEFT ONLY VAN HELSING--AND SHE WAS TAKEN EVER-SO-EASILY."*
*A CLUE TO WHICH WAS SHOWN LAST ISSUE--LEERING LEN.
"AS FOR NOW..."
ENTER FREELY, DRACULA, AND OF YOUR OWN WILL.
AH, HOW TOUCHING--YOU REMEMBERED THE WORDS FROM YOUR FATHER'S JOURNAL.
I SHOULD HAVE SLAIN THE FOOL BEFORE HE EVER WROTE THEM.
:AHEM!: GOOD EVENING, QUINCY--HOW PLEASANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU AND THAT ANIMAL YOU CARE FOR SO MUCH.
GR-RR

YOU ARE LOOKING QUITE WELL, OLD FRIEND.
HAVE YOU RECOVERED FROM MY DAUGHTER'S ATTACK, YET?*
YES, ABOUT A MONTH AGO.
*AS SHOWN IN GIANT-SIZE CHILLERS #1. -- LW.


YOUR DOG, HARKER --I SEEM TO BE BOTHERING HIM.
GRRR
SAINT IS A GOOD JUDGE OF CHARACTER, DRACULA.

TOUCHÉ, MY FRIEND. TO THE QUICK, I DARE SAY.
LISTEN, DRACULA, WE HAVE MUCH TO TALK OVER, I AM SURE.
WHY NOT TAKE A SEAT?

YOU ARE IN GOOD FORM TONIGHT, HARKER. "TAKE A SEAT--" VERY GOOD.
WHAT IS THIS CHAIR SET UP WITH? SILVER EXPLOSIVES? GARLIC BONDS?
I KNOW YOU, QUINCY-- YOU WOULD NOT OFFER A CHAIR TO ME UNLESS YOU HAD IT SET AS A TRAP.
BUT I AM CURIOUS. WILL YOU SHOW IT TO ME?

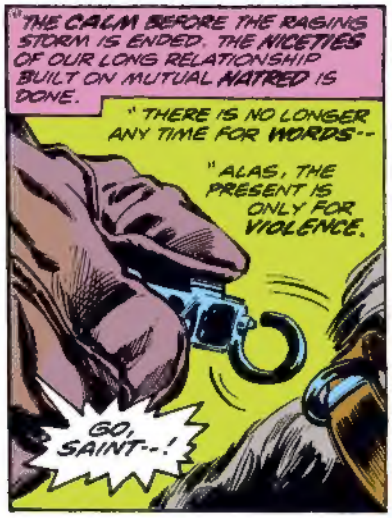
WHY NOT? AS LONG AS YOU DIDN'T FALL FOR IT.

TWO METAL BANDS SNAP OUT FROM THE CHAIR ARMS AND ATTACH THEMSELVES-- AND WHERE THEY ATTACH IS A WOODEN STAKE.
THE FORCE OF THE BANDS WOULD HAVE DRIVEN THE STAKE THROUGH YOUR HEART.

VERY GOOD, QUINCY... A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER YOUR LAST DESIGNS... WHEN WAS IT-- AH, YES-- 1919... THE TRICK WHIP--
--WITH THE SILVER-EDGED TIP.

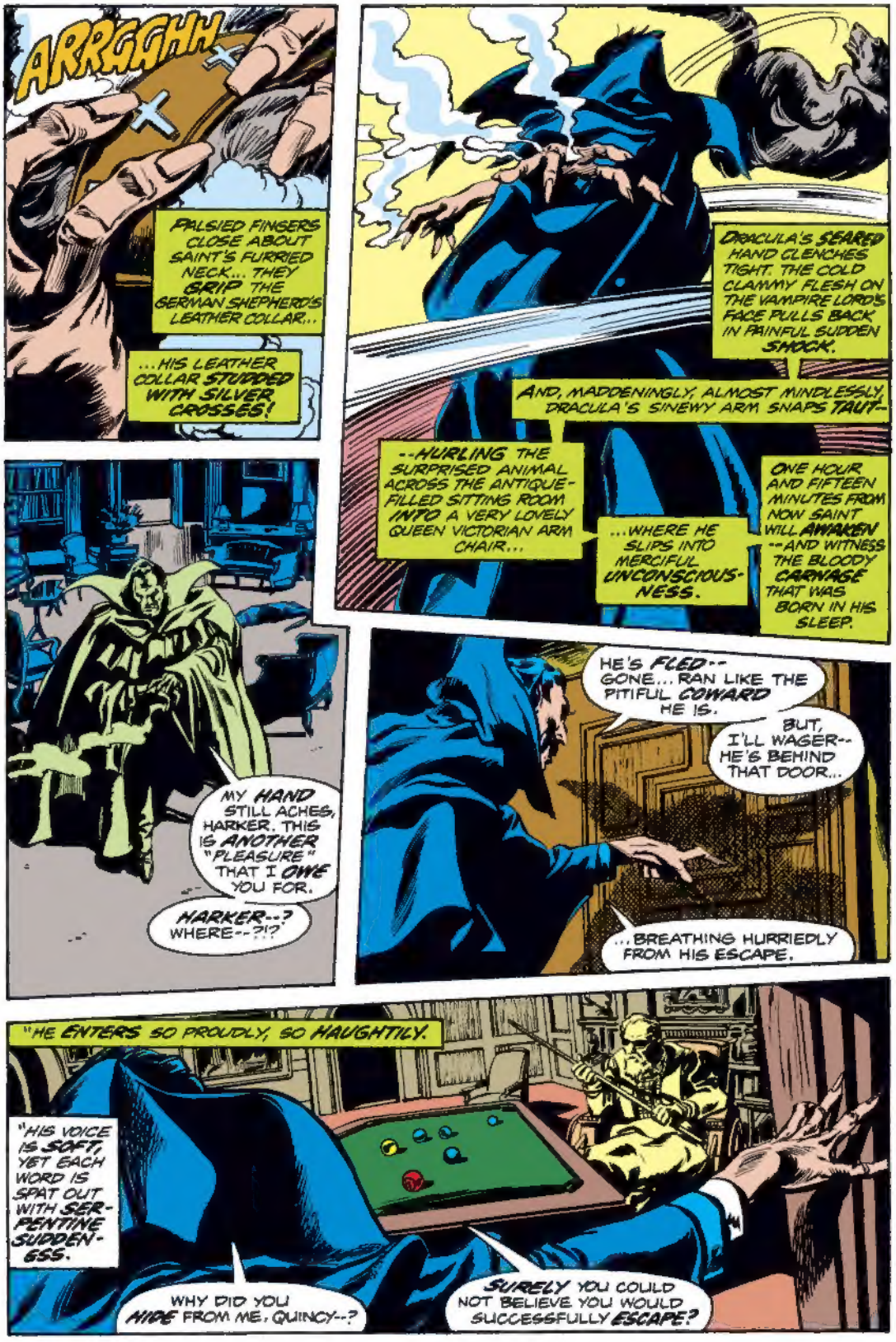
BUT THIS IS NOT THE PROPER TIME TO SPEAK OF NOSTALGIA, IS IT, QUINCY?
TILL NOW YOU'VE THOUGHT I HAD DIED IN THAT EXPLOSION IN THE ALPS.*
YET SOMEHOW YOU LEARNED OTHERWISE..
NOT ONLY THAT--BUT YOU HAVE PAPERS WHICH PROVE THAT I AM LOSING MY VAMPIRIC ABILITIES.
I WANT THOSE PAPERS--AND THE MAN WHO GAVE THEM TO YOU.
*TOD #21. --LONESOME LEN.

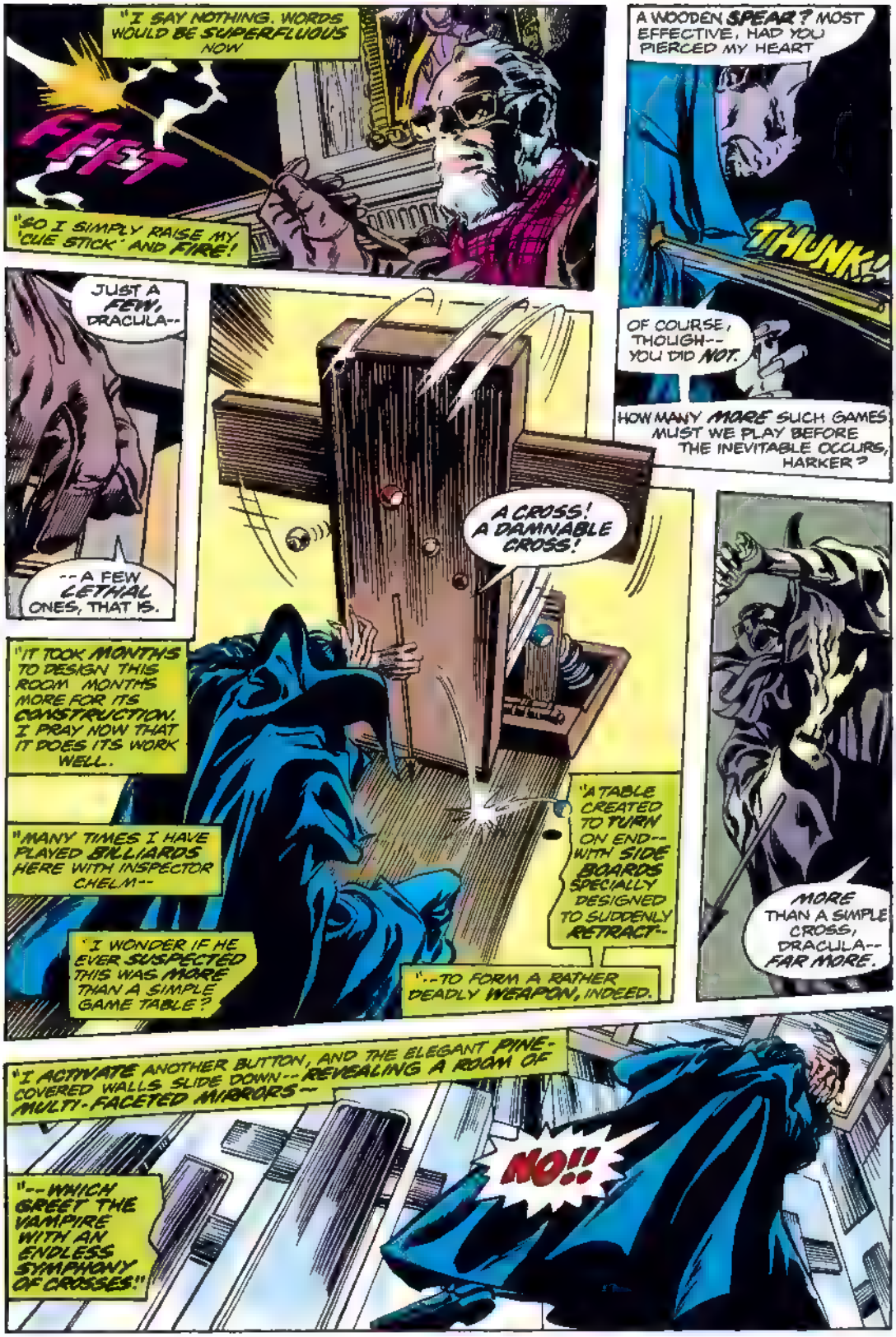
THE ANSWER TO BOTH THOSE REQUESTS IS "NO!"
I WILL KEEP THE PAPERS UNTIL YOU ARE SLAIN--
--WHICH IS BECOMING AN EVER MORE LIKELY OCCURRENCE. ISN'T THAT CORRECT, SAINT?


"THE CALM BEFORE THE RAGING STORM IS ENDED. THE NICETIES OF OUR LONG RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON MUTUAL HATRED IS DONE.
"THERE IS NO LONGER ANY TIME FOR WORDS--
"ALAS, THE PRESENT IS ONLY FOR VIOLENCE.
GO, SAINT--!

"I FEAR THERE SHALL BE NO VICTORIES TONIGHT...
"...NO GLADDENED WINNERS. ONLY MUCH SADDENED LOSERS.
"AND WE SHALL ALL BE THE WORSE FOR IT."
GRR
RAAGH

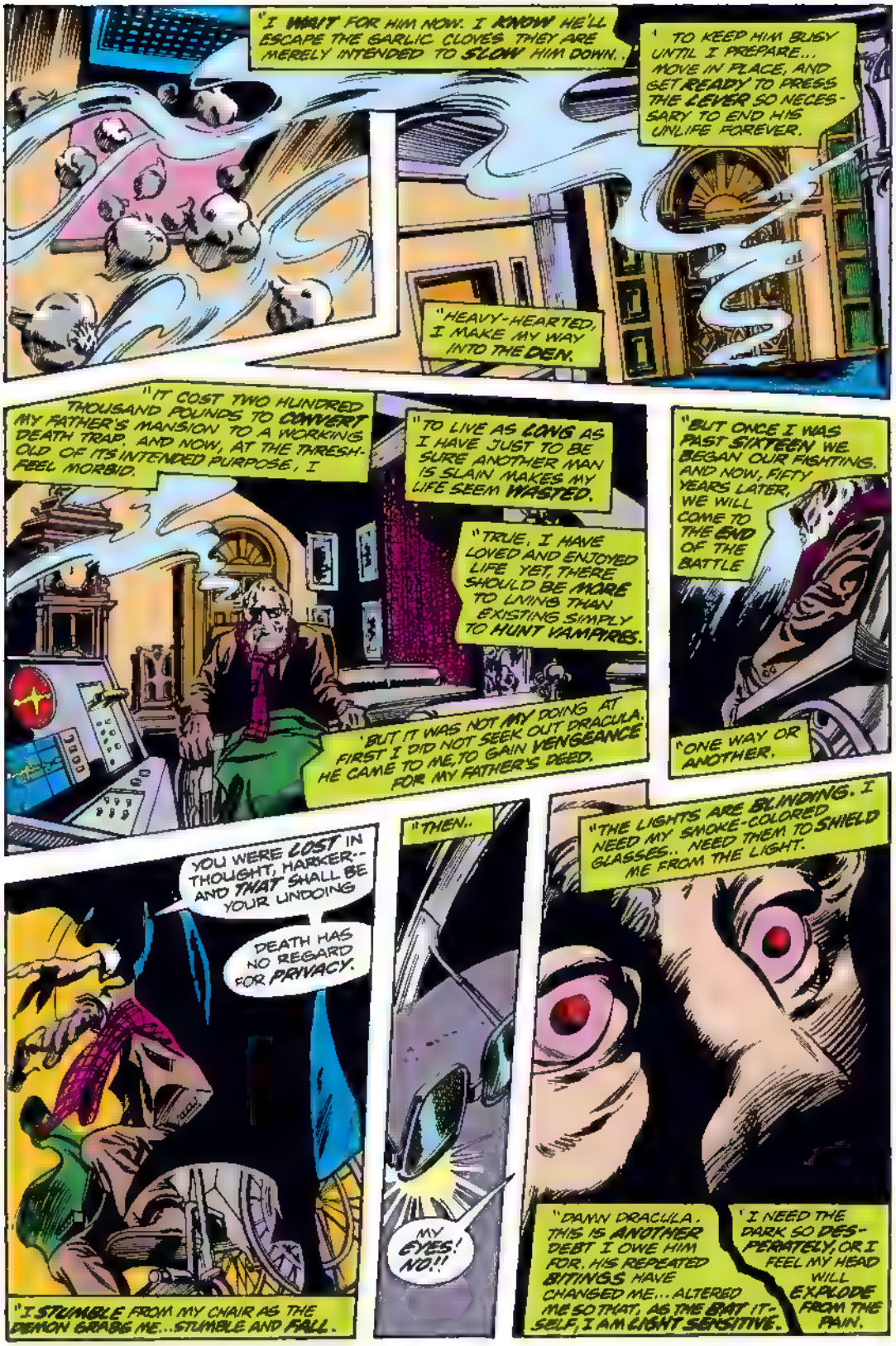
I'VE LONGED TO THROTTLE YOU FOR YEARS, ANIMAL. I'VE WAITED TO STRANGLE THE LIFE FROM YOUR BESTIAL HEART.
SSSSS
YOU HAVE STOOD DEFIANT TOO LONG. AND AS YOU CRUMBLE, SO, TOO, SHALL YOUR MASTER BE HUMBLED.
SO, TOO, SHALL ALL WHO OPPOSE--WHAT?
MY HAND!?! PAIN!!


ARRAGHH
PALSIED FINGERS CLOSE ABOUT SAINT'S FURRIED NECK... THEY GRIP THE GERMAN SHEPHERD'S LEATHER COLLAR...
...HIS LEATHER COLLAR STUDDED WITH SILVER CROSSES!
DRACULA'S SEARED HAND CLENCHES TIGHT. THE COLD CLAMMY FLESH ON THE VAMPIRE LORD'S FACE PULLS BACK IN PAINFUL SUDDEN SHOCK.
AND, MADDENINGLY, ALMOST MINDLESSLY, DRACULA'S SINEWY ARM SNAPS TAUT--
--HURLING THE SURPRISED ANIMAL ACROSS THE ANTIQUE-FILLED SITTING ROOM INTO A VERY LOVELY QUEEN VICTORIAN ARM CHAIR...
...WHERE HE SLIPS INTO MERCIFUL UNCONSCIOUSNESS.
ONE HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES FROM NOW SAINT WILL AWAKEN --AND WITNESS THE BLOODY CARNAGE THAT WAS BORN IN HIS SLEEP.
MY HAND STILL ACHES, HARKER. THIS IS ANOTHER "PLEASURE" THAT I OWE YOU FOR.
HARKER--? WHERE--?!?
HE'S FLED-- GONE... RAN LIKE THE PITIFUL COWARD HE IS.
BUT, I'LL WAGER-- HE'S BEHIND THAT DOOR...
...BREATHING HURRIEDLY FROM HIS ESCAPE.
"HE ENTERS SO PROUDLY, SO HAUGHTILY.
"HIS VOICE IS SOFT, YET EACH WORD IS SPAT OUT WITH SERPENTINE SUDDENESS.
WHY DID YOU HIDE FROM ME, QUINCY--?
SURELY YOU COULD NOT BELIEVE YOU WOULD SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPE?


"I SAY NOTHING. WORDS WOULD BE SUPERFLUOUS NOW
FFFT
"SO I SIMPLY RAISE MY 'CUE STICK' AND FIRE!
A WOODEN SPEAR? MOST EFFECTIVE, HAD YOU PIERCED MY HEART
THUNK!
OF COURSE, THOUGH-- YOU DID NOT.
HOW MANY MORE SUCH GAMES MUST WE PLAY BEFORE THE INEVITABLE OCCURS, HARKER?
JUST A FEW, DRACULA--
--A FEW LETHAL ONES, THAT IS.
A CROSS! A DAMNABLE CROSS!
"IT TOOK MONTHS TO DESIGN THIS ROOM MONTHS MORE FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION. I PRAY NOW THAT IT DOES ITS WORK WELL.
"MANY TIMES I HAVE PLAYED BILLIARDS HERE WITH INSPECTOR CHELM--
"A TABLE CREATED TO TURN ON END-- WITH SIDE BOARDS SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO SUDDENLY RETRACT--
"I WONDER IF HE EVER SUSPECTED THIS WAS MORE THAN A SIMPLE GAME TABLE?
"--TO FORM A RATHER DEADLY WEAPON, INDEED.
MORE THAN A SIMPLE CROSS, DRACULA-- FAR MORE.
"I ACTIVATE ANOTHER BUTTON, AND THE ELEGANT PINE-COVERED WALLS SLIDE DOWN-- REVEALING A ROOM OF MULTI-FACETED MIRRORS--
"--WHICH GREET THE VAMPIRE WITH AN ENDLESS SYMPHONY OF CROSSES!"
NO!!

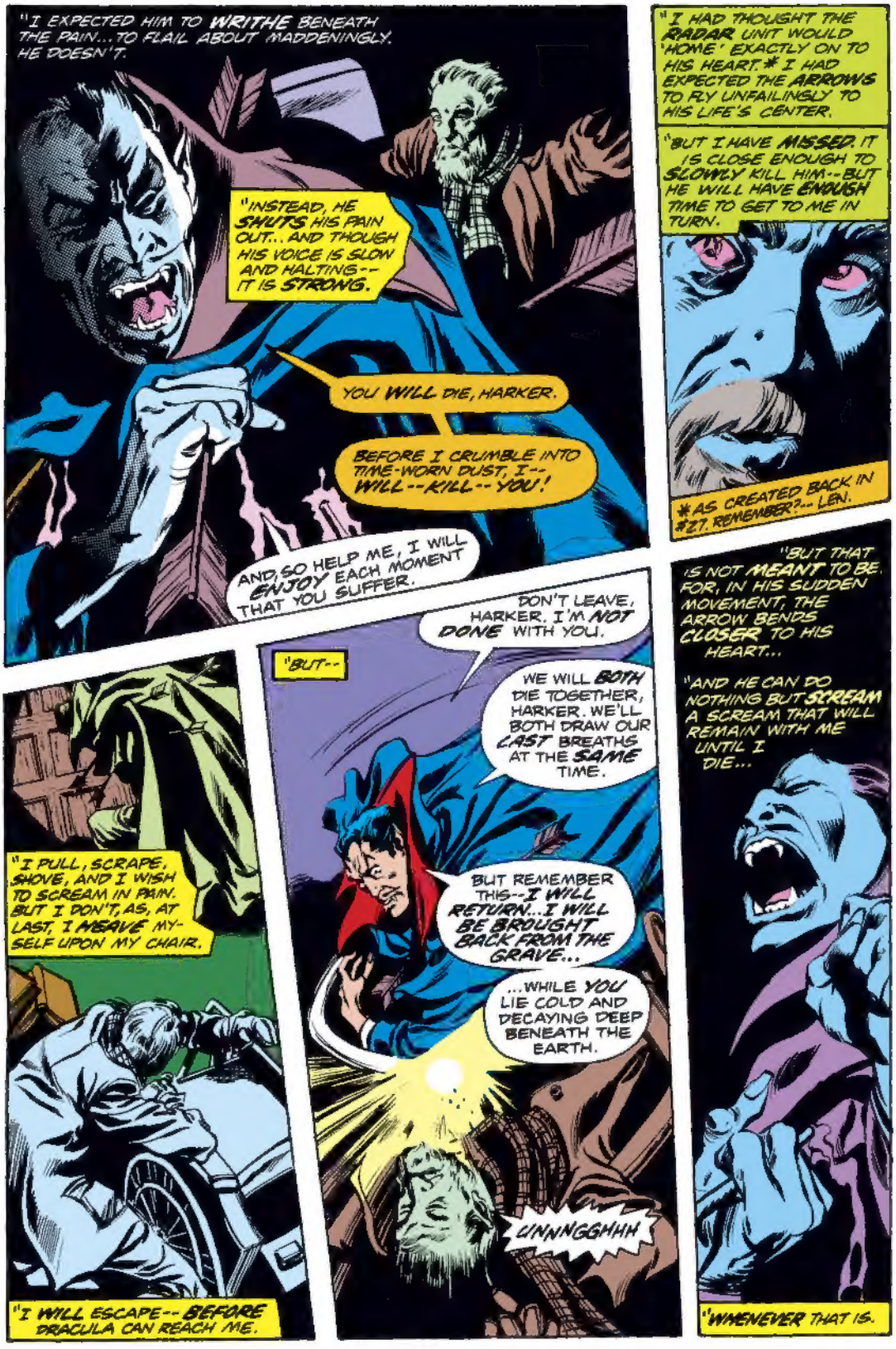
BLAST YOU, HARKER. I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS
MORE THREATS, DRACULA?
SURELY YOU CAN SLAY ME ONLY ONCE?
WRONG, OLD MAN! I CAN GIVE YOU THE GIFT OF VAMPIRISM--
--AND WATCH AS YOU SUFFER-- LAUGH AS YOU SQUIRM WITH MORAL INDIGNATION AS YOU SLAY YOUR VICTIM--AS YOU SIP THE SWEET ESSENCE OF BLOOD...
...AS YOU KILL THAT YOU MAY LIVE ON.
ONLY IF YOU CAN SLAY ME, DRACULA.
"THE FIEND IS SWIFT. HE SPINS, CATCHING MY POISON-TIPPED DARTS IN THE FOLDS OF HIS CLOAK.
"AND I CURSE THE DARK LUCK THAT IS MINE TONIGHT.
I AM THROUGH PLAYING YOUR CHILDISH GAMES. I CAME HERE FOR INFORMATION.
AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER-- I SHALL GET IT.
NO!
"IT COMES AS A SURPRISE.. A SUDDEN SHOCK. DRACULA STARES INTENTLY AS HE CLOSES IN ON ME--
"THEN HE GASPS-- ONE OF THE DARTS DID STRIKE!
"FOR ONLY A MOMENT HIS DEATH-MASK FACE FREEZES. THEN, AS MY SELF-PROPELLED WHEELCHAIR TAKES ME TO SAFETY...
"...HE LUNGES FORWARD, STUMBLES, AND COLLAPSES... SHATTERING THE WALL MIRRORS INTO A THOUSAND BLOOD-RED SHARDS."

YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED ME YET, HARKER. I STILL HAVE STRENGTH ENOUGH TO WRENCH THIS DAMNABLE WEAPON FROM ME BEFORE ITS POISON DOES ITS WORK
BUT I NEED TIME TO RECOVER. TIME TO GAIN MY WITS BEFORE THE FINAL BATTLE--
--WHEN QUINCY HARKER SHALL AT LONG LAST PERISH!
"IT IS A SILVER-BLUE MIST INTO WHICH DRACULA TRANSFORMS.. A MIST WHICH AWKWARDLY FLOWS FROM THE GAME ROOM INTO THE HALLWAY
"I WATCH, FASCINATED BY HIS CHANGE; HIS POWERS ARE FANTASTIC.. IF ONLY HE WERE NOT THE ANGEL OF DEATH--
"--WHAT BENEFIT HE COULD BE TO MAN.
"BUT NOW I LEAVE TO PREPARE FOR A NEW ATTACK.
"AND HOPE THAT HE POSITIONS HIMSELF SO I MAY YET DESTROY HIM.
BLAST IT ALL! IF I WEREN'T SLOWED SO MUCH I COULD HAVE AVOIDED ALL THOSE DARTS OF HIS.
YES--THOSE PAPERS MUST BE MINE--I MUST LEARN WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME--AND DISCOVER WHO HAS BEEN STEALING WHATEVER OF MY SOUL REMAINS.
HARKER! IT IS TIME ONCE MORE
"HE GLIDES CLOSER... CLOSER! YES --HE'LL STEP UPON THE SQUARE. MUST CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND HIM TO ASSURE HE WON'T ESCAPE THROUGH IT.
EH--?
SLAM
"IT'S OPENED NOW! HE'S OPENED THE PORTAL
WHAT?!?
CLOVES OF GARLIC-- RAINING ATOP ME?


"I WAIT FOR HIM NOW. I KNOW HE'LL ESCAPE THE GARLIC CLOVES THEY ARE MERELY INTENDED TO SLOW HIM DOWN..
' TO KEEP HIM BUSY UNTIL I PREPARE... MOVE IN PLACE, AND GET READY TO PRESS THE LEVER SO NECESSARY TO END HIS UNLIFE FOREVER.
"HEAVY-HEARTED, I MAKE MY WAY INTO THE DEN.
"IT COST TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS TO CONVERT MY FATHER'S MANSION TO A WORKING DEATH TRAP. AND NOW, AT THE THRESHOLD OF ITS INTENDED PURPOSE, I FEEL MORBID.
"TO LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE JUST TO BE SURE ANOTHER MAN IS SLAIN MAKES MY LIFE SEEM WASTED.
"TRUE. I HAVE LOVED AND ENJOYED LIFE YET, THERE SHOULD BE MORE TO LIVING THAN EXISTING SIMPLY TO HUNT VAMPIRES.
'BUT IT WAS NOT MY DOING AT FIRST I DID NOT SEEK OUT DRACULA. HE CAME TO ME, TO GAIN VENGEANCE FOR MY FATHER'S DEED.
"BUT ONCE I WAS PAST SIXTEEN WE BEGAN OUR FIGHTING. AND NOW, FIFTY YEARS LATER, WE WILL COME TO THE END OF THE BATTLE
'ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.
YOU WERE LOST IN THOUGHT, HARKER-- AND THAT SHALL BE YOUR UNDOING
DEATH HAS NO REGARD FOR PRIVACY.
"I STUMBLE FROM MY CHAIR AS THE DEMON GRABS ME...STUMBLE AND FALL.
"THEN..
MY EYES! NO!!
"THE LIGHTS ARE BLINDING. I NEED MY SMOKE-COLORED GLASSES.. NEED THEM TO SHIELD ME FROM THE LIGHT.
"DAMN DRACULA. THIS IS ANOTHER DEBT I OWE HIM FOR. HIS REPEATED BITINGS HAVE CHANGED ME... ALTERED ME SO THAT, AS THE BAT IT-SELF, I AM LIGHT SENSITIVE.
'I NEED THE DARK SO DESPERATELY, OR I FEEL MY HEAD WILL EXPLODE FROM THE PAIN.

FALL WHERE YOU WILL... GROPE AS BEST YOU CAN, BUT YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ME, HARKER--NOT BEFORE THE INFORMATION I SEEK IS MINE.
"I SHUT MY EYES. THERE IS NO TIME TO SEARCH FOR MY LENSES NOW I MUST REACH THE CONSOLE.
"I HAVE TRAVERSED THIS ROOM SO MANY TIMES, YET NOW I BLINDLY FLAIL ABOUT... HELPLESSLY STUMBLE INTO TABLE LEGS. I MUST MUFFLE THE SCREAM THAT COMES TO MY THROAT
IT IS A CENTURY LATER BEFORE I REACH THE CONSOLE. I LUNGE FOR THE LEVER AS BEST I CAN, BUT I CAN FEEL HIS DEATH'S BREATH UPON ME, AND MY HAIR STANDS ON END AT THE NAPE OF MY NECK.
"HIS HAND IS ON MINE, BUT STILL MY SHAKING PALM PULLS THE LEVER DOWN. HOW, I DON'T KNOW BUT, IT IS DOWN!
YOU'LL NOT HAVE THE CHANCE TO UNLEASH ANOTHER OF YOUR WEAPONS, HARKER.
AS YOU WILL FAIL IN ANYTHING YOU TRY AGAIN.
FOR, I'LL CRUSH YOU AS EASILY AS I DO THIS DEVICE OF YOURS.
THERE, HARKER--YOUR FINAL CHANCE IS OVER.
"WRONG. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS LATE. BUT YOU'LL NOT REALIZE THAT, DEMON--NOT UNTIL IT IS FAR TOO LATE.
AND, HOW I WILL LAUGH WHEN YOU BEG FOR ME TO STOP.

I SAID THE GAMES ARE NOW OVER, HARKER. BUT YOU DID NOT BELIEVE ME.
NOW YOU MUST... FOR YOU LIE HELPLESSLY AT MY FEET... YOU CAN NOT MOVE, CAN NOT RUN... CAN NOT ESCAPE.
TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW, OR I SHALL SURELY LEARN THE TRUTH ANYWAY.
"I WAIT... FOR I KNOW WHAT IS TO COME... AND HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE. BUT STILL THE TIME SEEMS NOT TO MOVE. I GULP, HOLD MY BREATH COUNT THE MOMENTS QUIETLY IN MY MIND. THEN...
"THE LIGHTS GO OUT!
"THE FIRST STEP IS MADE. IN FIVE SECONDS DRACULA WILL DIE!
"AS THE DARKNESS FLOODS OVER ME, I OPEN MY EYES; THEY ARE SOOTHED BY THE SWELLING BLACKNESS--
"AND THEY NO LONGER THROB WITH PAIN.
"THREE SECONDS REMAIN.
"TWO SECONDS MORE, AND ALL THE TIME DRACULA RANTS ON. I DO NOT LISTEN.
YOU FAIL TO SPEAK, WHICH LEAVES ME NO ALTERNATIVE.
WHAT I DO NOT LEARN TODAY--
--I SHALL KNOW THREE DAYS HENCE.
"I HEAR THE FAINT WHIRRING NOISE. UNDOUBTEDLY, DRACULA DOES AS WELL.
"BUT IT NO LONGER MATTERS.
FOR THIS TIME HE CAN NOT ESCAPE ME!
THIS TIME DRACULA WILL BE SLAIN!
YAARRGGHH!


"I EXPECTED HIM TO WRITHE BENEATH THE PAIN...TO FLAIL ABOUT MADDENINGLY. HE DOESN'T.
"INSTEAD, HE SHUTS HIS PAIN OUT...AND THOUGH HIS VOICE IS SLOW AND HALTING--IT IS STRONG.
YOU WILL DIE, HARKER.
BEFORE I CRUMBLE INTO TIME-WORN DUST, I--WILL--KILL--YOU!
AND, SO HELP ME, I WILL ENJOY EACH MOMENT THAT YOU SUFFER.
"I HAD THOUGHT THE RADAR UNIT WOULD 'HOME' EXACTLY ON TO HIS HEART.* I HAD EXPECTED THE ARROWS TO FLY UNFAILINGLY TO HIS LIFE'S CENTER.
"BUT I HAVE MISSED. IT IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO SLOWLY KILL HIM--BUT HE WILL HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GET TO ME IN TURN.
*AS CREATED BACK IN #27. REMEMBER?--LEN.
"I PULL, SCRAPE, SHOVE, AND I WISH TO SCREAM IN PAIN. BUT I DON'T, AS, AT LAST, I HEAVE MYSELF UPON MY CHAIR.
"I WILL ESCAPE--BEFORE DRACULA CAN REACH ME.
"BUT--
DON'T LEAVE, HARKER. I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU.
WE WILL BOTH DIE TOGETHER, HARKER. WE'LL BOTH DRAW OUR LAST BREATHS AT THE SAME TIME.
BUT REMEMBER THIS--I WILL RETURN...I WILL BE BROUGHT BACK FROM THE GRAVE...
...WHILE YOU LIE COLD AND DECAYING DEEP BENEATH THE EARTH.
UNNNGGMHH
"BUT THAT IS NOT MEANT TO BE. FOR, IN HIS SUDDEN MOVEMENT, THE ARROW BENDS CLOSER TO HIS HEART...
"AND HE CAN DO NOTHING BUT SCREAM A SCREAM THAT WILL REMAIN WITH ME UNTIL I DIE...
"WHENEVER THAT IS.

"THIS MUST BE A LUDICROUS SCENE FOR ANY TO WATCH: AN OLD MAN STRUGGLING TO REACH A WHEELCHAIR...
"...A DEMON DRESSED IN MIDNIGHT BLACK--A VAMPIRE LORD OF DARKNESS WRITHING AND TWISTING IN PAIN.
"WE SEEMINGLY CREATE A SPASTIC DANCE MEANT FOR A WORLD TO LAUGH AT. YET, NO MAN DARES LAUGH.
THIS IS IT, DRACULA... THE FINAL MOMENTS AS WE BOTH KNEW WOULD ONE DAY COME.
OH, I'VE WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS, AND EVEN IF I DIE TONIGHT, IT WOULD BE WORTH THE LONG, LONG STAY.
YOU'VE TORTURED ME MORE THAN ANY MAN CAN ENDURE. YOU'VE SLAIN MY WIFE... MY DARLING ELIZABETH.
YOU CALLOUSLY KILLED MY DAUGHTER --TURNED HER INTO ONE OF YOUR OWN WRETCHED UNDEAD.
YOU FORCED ME TO SLAY HER... TO MURDER THE ONE I SO LOVED.
I AM A GENTLE MAN, DRACULA. BUT, AS GOD IS MY WITNESS... AS THE LORD HIMSELF LOOKS DOWN ON US BOTH--
--I PRAY THAT YOU SUFFER FOR ALL THE SUFFERING YOU HAVE INFLICTED.
I PRAY THAT YOU DIE BURNING PAINFULLY, AGONIZINGLY IN HELL!!

NO, HARKER--IT IS YOU WHO SHALL SUFFER THE MOST SHOULD I DIE.
BUT, IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE ME, CALL THAT GIRL --PHONE RACHEL VAN HELSING, AND SEE.
RACHEL? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?
PHONE HER YOU'VE NOTHING TO LOSE.
I--I'LL CHECK, BUT IF YOU ARE LYING--?
I AM ALREADY DYING, HARKER. WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?
"I PRAY THIS IS MERELY A TACTIC TO STALL HIS DEATH. YET, I KNOW DRACULA TOO WELL. HE WOULD NOT MAKE ANY IDLE THREATS. AND THOUGH I DO NOT WANT TO HEAR WHAT I KNOW I WILL, STILL I PHONE HER...
"AND, GOD HELP HER, I HEAR HER TROUBLED, PAIN-WRACKED VOICE ON THE OTHER END.
QUINCY! THANK GOD! THEY SAY THEY'LL SLAUGHTER ME IF YOU LET HIM DIE!
ENOUGH, GIRL--THE OLD MAN HEARD YOU.
HE'S GOT THE IDEA.
KILL HIM, QUINCY! I'M NOT IMPORTANT IN ALL THIS! KILL HIM! KILL HIM!
OKAY, OLD MAN. RELEASE OUR MASTER.
FOR IF YOU KILL DRACULA--YOU WILL SLAY RACHEL VAN HELSING AS WELL.

NEXT: TAJ, FRANK DRAKE, and THE DEADLY DECISION!